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House of Representatives

HONORING PRIVATE FIRST CLASS GEOFFREY A. WHITSITT

HON. BOB INGLIS
OF SOUTH CAROLINA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Tuesday, January 19, 2010

MR. INGLIS: Madam Speaker, I rise to remember Private First Class Geoffrey A. Whitsitt, a 21-year-old of Travelers Rest, South Carolina, Army Airborne, serving in Afghanistan, headed for Special Forces training and hoping to become an Army Ranger.

Geoff was 2 weeks shy of his 22nd birthday when, on January 13, an improvised explosive device was detonated near the Humvee he was driving, killing Geoff, his sergeant, and seriously wounding their gunner. Some Taliban or al Qaeda operative out there might be thinking that they killed an infidel. They didn't. They failed at three levels.

First, Geoff was no infidel. He was a believer. He was a believer in America and a believer in the King of all creation, a citizen of the freest, most blessed land in the world, and a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. Geoff wanted that kingdom to come. He prayed for that kingdom to come. He worked for that kingdom to come. He served for that kingdom to come. In the end, he went there before the invisible became visible here.

Those who detonated that IED failed at another level. They think they frightened Geoff's family, his friends and his countrymen. They're wrong. My wife and I visited the Whitsitts last night. Their faith in America, their faith in the author of our salvation, the Prince of Peace, the King of Kings is undiminished. They know that other Geoff's will run the hills and woods that Geoff loved to run in the northern part of our county. They know that another Geoff will come in last in his first cross-country meet and finish 16th in the State by the end of the season.

They know that another Geoff will take what he learned of love and books and faith in his home school and at Greenville Tech Charter High School and volunteer to serve his Nation.

They know that another dad will take another Geoff to the banks of the Middle Saluda River for fishing and for talks about the essence of life. Those who detonated that IED failed at a third and higher level. They think that Geoff is dead. He isn't. He lives. He lives in our hearts and minds because he is one of our heroes.

He lives in the heart of his older brother, Steven, serving with steely determination in the United States Navy.

He will always live in the hearts of his mom and dad. They loved him, led him, admired him, and gave him up for the rest of us.

Their gift reminds us of the gift of all gifts – a father who had sovereign control over all aspects of His Son's substitutionary death, and who gave Him up for us all. Geoff lives in the nail-pierced hands of that Savior, and no one can snatch him out of those hands.
